

# THE BIG LEAGUER GOES TO A BULL FIGHT

By ALLEN SANGREE

Drawings by John Sloan

EVER see a bull fight?" asked Left Fielder Dan Bunts. "It's great! You know—nothing like a ball game, yet it is, kinder, in a way. Steve Doyle—Big Steve—and me watched one when we hit Madrid in that round the world tower. That's where we seen the only thing in the line of bleachers outside that frost in Rome 'at the tout called a Can-I-see-um."

"No, I can't," says Steve. "What yer doin', tryin' t' kid me?"

"Un'erstan' this guy was tellin' us that they used to play ball there; as if any fan would pay fifty cents to sit on them cold stones for two hours, not to speak of a double header! Just onct I set on a rock when we was playin' an exhibition game at Stony Point outside of Providence. Malaria—that's what the doctors said it give me."

"But this Spanish thing was no frost. The bleachers was jammed to the sky line, an' the boxes too. Un'erstan'? It was like Madison Square Garden with the roof off, you know—a fence round the field about five feet high so the home team could beat it over the top when Mr. Bull got gay. There was no benches for home team or visitors."

"On the level, it's a wonder to me that some of you reporter guys don't get next to this thing. They're afraid of havin' it wrote up. We piped that off right away. There wasn't no press stand, no score board, no telegraph operators. They know their book. If this S. P. Y. M. C. T. U ever got next, it would be roused in jig time. But I'll say this: It's a great sight."

"You know, the first thing they do is for the home team, as you might call 'em, to parade around the field, same as we do here on the openin' day. The bull sets over in his dressing room. The home team has a club house alongside, and there was a lad tellin' me that they had a little church where Mat O'Dorr and Pick O'Dorr, and the whole O'Dorr family I guess, get blessed before the game. There's nothing so funny about that. I knowed a pitcher onct,—an' he had as good a fast ball as I ever seen,—who wouldn't ever go in the box until he'd said a prayer."

"Well, that procession was certainly the richest thing I ever looked at. Steve and me was sittin' on the front row seats in what they call a *ray de shade*. It costs more to sit there than on the *ray de sole* seat. That means sun in Spanish. I got that off a fella' that was sittin' nex' to me peddlin' shoes. We was close to the box seats, where a man named Grandy [grandee], as this drummer called him, was handling the show. The swell women were all in there, too. And sa-ay, old boy! we trained at New Orleans one spring, just at Mardi Gras, and they was sure a line of big league brunettes there; but, take it from me, they looked bushy compared to these! Steve said he'd sit on the bench a whole season if he could a talked Spanish. They was all rigged out in a kind of veil over their heads. This drummer said it was a *mantezer*. And believe me, that's what it is. When a pair o' them hot lamps looking from under that lace thing got to me it was the same as tryin' to pull down a high one in a sun field. Steve picked out one close enough to reach her with a bat. She was that delicate that I bet you she'd a dropped dead in a shower bath; but that didn't take nothing from her eyes. They'd a melted the solder in a

mask. Says Steve, 'If there's a chance for a good hitter in this bull fightin' league, they can't sign me too quick!' Gees! I laughed. Steve always was a mark."

"As I was tellin', they had a regular procession. In front of the team two fella's rode in silk hats—stockholders, I guess they were. After them come Mat O'Dorr ridin' all alone. This here O'Dorr family has things pretty much its own way, and, as I got it, it was as if this Mat was something like big Ed Delehanty, with the other Delehanty boys workin' on the team."

"Hits 'em to the fence?" I asks the drummer. "He grins and says, 'Yes, he puts it on the bull with that sword he's got.'"

"Steve and me looked him over. And sa-ay! if any of us ever come out in the uniform he had on, I'd just like to know what they'd do to us in the Kerry Patch at St. Louis? You won't believe it when I tell you he had short pants made of green satin that fit 'im



"The Bull Put One Over the Fence."

closer than the kind we used to wear before the days of the Brotherhood, and down the sides was big gold stripes. And pink silk stockings! Sure! I seen 'em when he rode by. An' a red silk sash! An' a dinky vest of white satin, cut low, over a peekaboo shirt, with frills all down the front! An' a low neck collar and a long red tie! I told you you wouldn't believe it. Can you see me picking one off the fence in that raiment?"

"But that ain't all; there was a green satin coat, short, just like the vest, unbuttoned, and all—you know—with gold! And down his back—honest—there was a plat tied with a ribbon, same as you see on a girl! An' that's the truth!"

"Steve bunged his eyes at it! 'Oh, ain't she sweet!' he whoops. 'For the dear Lord's sake,' he says to the drummer, 'he ain't goin' to run the bases with that porteer on his arm?'—meaning the curtain that he carried over his left arm, which was the same as his pants, green satin. That's the only way you could tell he was Irish, for his skin was as brown as Abbatichio's or Big Chief Bender's. All he had to hit 'em out with was a sword about as long as Willy Keeler's bat."

"After Mat come the rest of the team. There was two fella's built for infieling and dressed like chorus girls—Bandy Rillers was their names."

"Where do these lads play?" asks Steve of the shoe seller.

"You see them darts with the baby ribbon on? They t'row them t' the bull. You watch!"

"After these pitchers come four more o' the team. There was no tellin' what their position was. 'Shoo flies,' says the drummer. 'They kid the bull with that red dry goods they're carryin'.'"

"At that, one 'minded you of Nick Altrock."

"An Outfielder."

He puts his hand to his mouth and made some crack, an' the fan jest roared. I wished I knew what he was sayin'."

"But what got us goin' was Pick O'Dorr and his pal. They looked like a pair o' cowboys, in red pants with fringe an' wide hats, an' carried spears like you see in a Amazon march."

"Outfielders," thinks Steve. "They spear 'em on the drive."

"G'wan!" I says. "With them plugs?" They was on horses, you know. Murder! I never see such a pile o' bones. You could smell a phosphate foundry as they went by."

"I see their finish," says Steve to me, sizin' up the red bandanner that each nag had over his left eye. "They won't get away from the plate if the bull's got a good curve ball."

"Maybe they're umpires," says I, 'bein' half blind."

"Well, are they goin' to ring the bell?" Steve asks."

"In five minutes," says the drummer. "They begin at four, same as a ball game. Wait till the mules roll by, Jennie; then you'll see Grandy start it by t'rowin' a key to Olga Seal [al-guazil]. He was meanin' one o' the stockholders who had turned back an' was jugglin' his lid before the grand stand."

"Last come three mules, gray as rats, all fussed up with red harness, hitched three abreast, an' a couple of mascots drivin'. 'On the home team too,' I joshes the shoe boy."

"Undertakers," says he. "They carry off the dead ones."

"Gees! I could hardly hear him talk. The noise was somethin' fierce! There was two bands playin', an' every blessed fan was up on his hind legs, yellin' as if some one had

cleaned the bases with a home run. The little dame sittin' close to Steve was rappin' her fan like a guy in a minstrel show with a pair o' bones; signalin' the *mantezer* with the other hand, an' hittin' grounders at Steve with her googoes."

"She's mine!" says Steve, bawlin' in my ear an' spikin' me on the shin. "I got the Indian sign on her."

"Look out!" calls the drummer. "He's goin' to catch it now!"

"Little Olga was all set for that key; an' I wish you could a seen the way he was holdin' his mitts. 'He's got a chance to make twenty-three potatoes [pesetas],' says the shoe lad. On the level, that's the rule—prize for making the ketcho."

"With that Grandy jest tossed it—no speed at all—a key half as long as your arm. The lobster let it go through him!"

"To the bench for you!" yells Steve, pushin' out his big breadwinner with its busted knuckles so that the little señoriter could get to it. "T'row him the spuds anyway!" he sings to Grandy. "He can't hold 'em!" There wasn't another peep in the crowd, an' they all give Steve the sour eye. Only the drummer, he laughed like blazes. I seen that Steve was in bad. And he got wise when the girl turned and chilled him. "Guess I'm a rube," he says, flushin' up."

"There was no practisin'. The field was clean, 'cept for Pick O'Dorr, his pal on horseback, and the four shooflies who was already beginning to wind up with their red rags. There was a bugle blowed, and—Bing!—that bull was in the middle of the diamond before Pick could get a grip on his bat. I thought that there was some rootin' before, but you oughter heard 'em now. They didn't have to give this lad a chance to warm up. He had his speed with him; but his control was rotten. He started with his horns down to t'row 'em to Pick O'Dorr. Pick's horse ballooned all over the diamond. In jumps Pick's pal and jabs the bull one in his chuck



"Mat O'Dorr to the Bat."